

Statement on 1115 Waiver from Individuals who Participate in Human Service Programs

Recommendation #1

We recommend that all human service systems integrate professionals with the Certified Recovery Support Specialists (CRSS) credential. A Recovery Support Specialist is someone with lived mental health recovery experience (or co-occurring condition) who has *earned* a credential demonstrating competency in advocacy, mentoring, professional responsibility and recovery support. Recovery Support Services (aka peer support) is a best practice model for transforming lives and continued CRSS expansion is a direct path to transforming our entire system.

Presently, the mental health system is the single largest CRSS employer. However, individuals with mental health conditions often utilize Primary Healthcare, Intellectual/Developmental Services, Child & Family Services, Older Adult Services, Housing Services and sometimes are involved with the justice system for years before our mental health needs become known. These systems need to begin employing individuals who provide Recovery Support Services so we have access to a supporter who is uniquely qualified to provide living proof of recovery and wellness.

Recommendation #2

We recommend that the waiver reflect the critical importance of Recovery Support Services. “Peer support services” are mentioned one time in the entire document, yet a large majority of us attribute our health and wellness to Recovery Support Services. The document speaks about standard credentialing requirements, creating new and sustainable healthcare roles, team-based care, regional public health hubs and advisory committees with no indication that Recovery Support Specialists will indeed be part of the team/hub/workgroup.

It is important for you to recognize that, despite not having the same resources as most stakeholder groups have which enable them to more fully participate in this process, we have important information to contribute. Illinois has the most comprehensive competency-based credential in the entire nation and this waiver needs to place appropriate value on the human potential that is unleashed through Recovery Support Services in the following ways.

- Include a service definition for Recovery Support Services in the appendix.
- Include CRSS in service definitions and provider qualifications for each waiver service.
- Include workforce development across the human spectrum which is specific to CRSS.
 - Education hours and supervised internships necessary to earn the credential
 - Learning collaborative with participation from Recovery Support Specialists and immediate Supervisor necessary to insure success with new/existing programs
 - Continuing education for individuals to maintain credential

Summary

We, the undersigned organizations comprised of peers in mental health recovery, respectfully submit these recommendations for inclusion in the 1115 waiver application on February 18, 2014.

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Access Living

Active Minds at Southern Illinois University of Edwardsville

Alexian Brothers Center for Mental Health / Advocates for Mental Health

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

GROW in Illinois

Human Resources Center of Edgar and Clark Counties / Living Room Program

IMPACT CIL

Kenneth Young Center / CRSS Group

NAMI Chicago / Pathways in Living Education & Social Support Group

NAMI Southwestern Illinois / Connection Support Group

New Foundation Center / Multiple Consumers Scattered-Sites Members Group

Next Steps NFP

Recovery Outreach Center

Sacred Creations

Statewide Independent Living Council of Illinois

The Alliance

The Awakenings Project

UIC Center on Mental Health Services Research & Policy, Judith A. Cook, Ph.D., Director

Vet Net

Please contact aj.french@sacredcreations.org if you wish to discuss the aforementioned recommendations or if you have questions. Thank you.